Responses to Examiner's Remarks in Detailed Action

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested. The Application stands rejected as to all claims currently pending, on the basis of Miller, U.S. Patent 2,201,372 ("Miller") and of the combination of Harper, U.S. Patent No. 5,476,292 ("Harper") with Miller. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections.

Interview Acknowledgement

Applicant acknowledges and thanks the Examiner for the courtesy of the interview conducted on August 5, 2003 at 3:00 p.m. Pursuant to that interview, Applicant understands that the Examiner anticipates withdrawal of rejections to Claim 2 and its dependent claims, and to Claim 16, in light of the discussion.

Drawings

1. The Examiner requires insertion of the legend "Prior Art" to Figure 1. As shown in the attached annotated drawing correction, Applicant has included such legend.
2. The Examiner requires showing of the "lip being at least partially within" the female pipe portion. As shown in the attached annotated drawing correction, Applicant has revised Figure 4 to show the compression gland advanced by tightening of the bolts, which renders the lip within the bell of the female pipe. Support for this change is present in Figure 7 (which shows the lip within the bell, in a different embodiment) and at paragraph 5 of the Specification as filed.
3. The Examiner requires correction of the use of reference character "1," which appears in the unamended drawings to refer to both the locking segment and to portions of the gasket 2. Applicant has corrected this error by removing reference character 1 and its lead line from Fig. 1, and by extending the lead line in Fig. 4 to more clearly designate the segment.
4. The proposed drawing correction is attached as an appendix hereto.

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§ 112 Issues

The Examiner objected to Claims 2, 4-11, and 16 because it was unclear from Figures 1-6 how the lip of the gland was partially within the female pipe portion. Applicant's amendment to Figure 4, as discussed with the Examiner on August 5, 2003, clarifies this issue. Figure 7 as originally filed also shows the lip within the female pipe. Finally, with regard to Claim 16, Applicant has amended the Claim to specify that it is only the lip of the gland that is said to extend partially within the female pipe.

Claim Rejections, § 102 & 103

Re: Claims 2-11 and 16 (excluding claim 3)

The Examiner rejects Claim 16 and Claim 2 and its dependents over Miller, as well as over Miller in combination with Harper. An element of Claim 2 and all of its dependents is a "compression gland having a lip ... at least partially within the second pipe portion..." Claim 16 includes a similar limitation. As noted in the interview on August 5, 2003, neither Miller nor Harper show or support a lip of a compression gland that extends at least partially within the female pipe. In fact, neither reference shows a lip or protrusions *capable* of extending within the female pipe portion. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Re: Claim 3

The Examiner rejected Claim 3 over Miller, as well as over Miller in combination with Harper, without discussion of the limitation appearing at the end of claim 3:

> "...transferring a first portion of an extractive force to said gland and a second portion of such force to the second pipe portion, which first portion and second portion are each of a magnitude less than the magnitude of the extractive force."

Applicant respectfully urges that without identification of this limitation in Miller or other reference, the rejection is without basis under MPEP 2131, and should be withdrawn. The limitation describes that the single straight-line (axial) extractive force is

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translated into a two vector force as it is transmitted through the segment. One of the two vectors can be drawn between a tooth of the segment and protrusion 17 (i.e., into the bell, which vector creates a radial load), while the other vector is drawn through the elbow 3 (i.e., into the gland, which does not create a radial load). Radial loading can thus be created in sufficient magnitude to ensure gripping of the spigot, but also is controlled below the level at which prior art would puncture the spigot. Further, direction of a vector directly into the bell reduces the strain borne by the bolts, which can actually stretch in extreme conditions. No such limitation or teaching has been cited in the prior art. Applicant requests withdrawal of the rejection.

Re: Claim 13 - 15.

Applicant has cancelled Claims 13-15, without prejudice to its right to reassert such claims in a divisional application.

Fees

This response is timely and no fees or extensions are required.

Applicant has diligently sought to comply with all requirements and to correct all informalities and objections. The Application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and a timely Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
BRADLEY ARANT ROSE & WHITE LLP

August 6, 2003

Nathan W. Johnson
Reg. No. 44173
205-521-8369

ATTACHMENTS

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Appl. No. 09/590,586
Response Dated Aug. 6, 2003
Reply to Office Action of 6/9/03

PROPOSED DRAWING CORRECTIONS

Drawings not change approved by Examiner NB 11/4/03

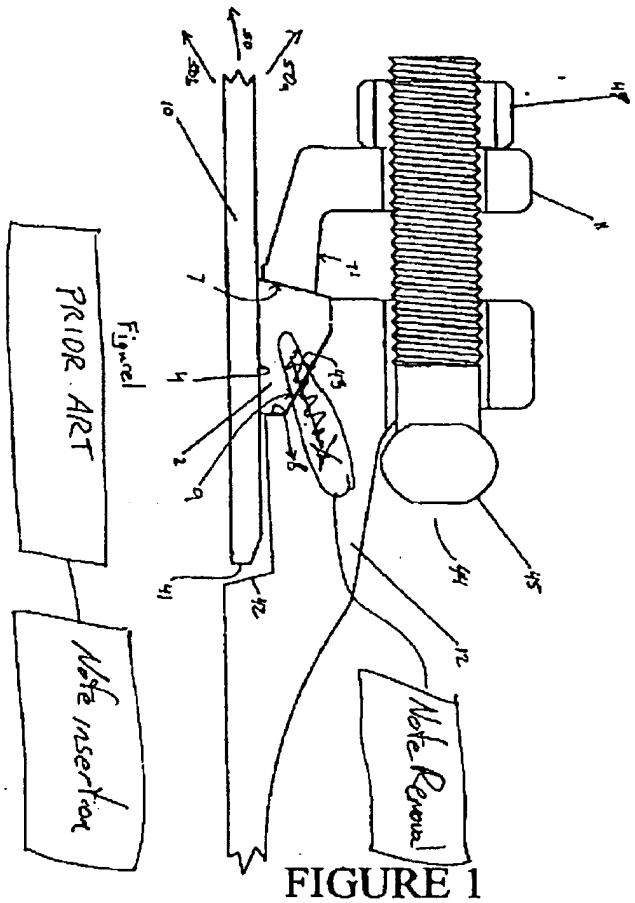


FIGURE 1

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Drawing changes not approved by Examiner 11/4/03

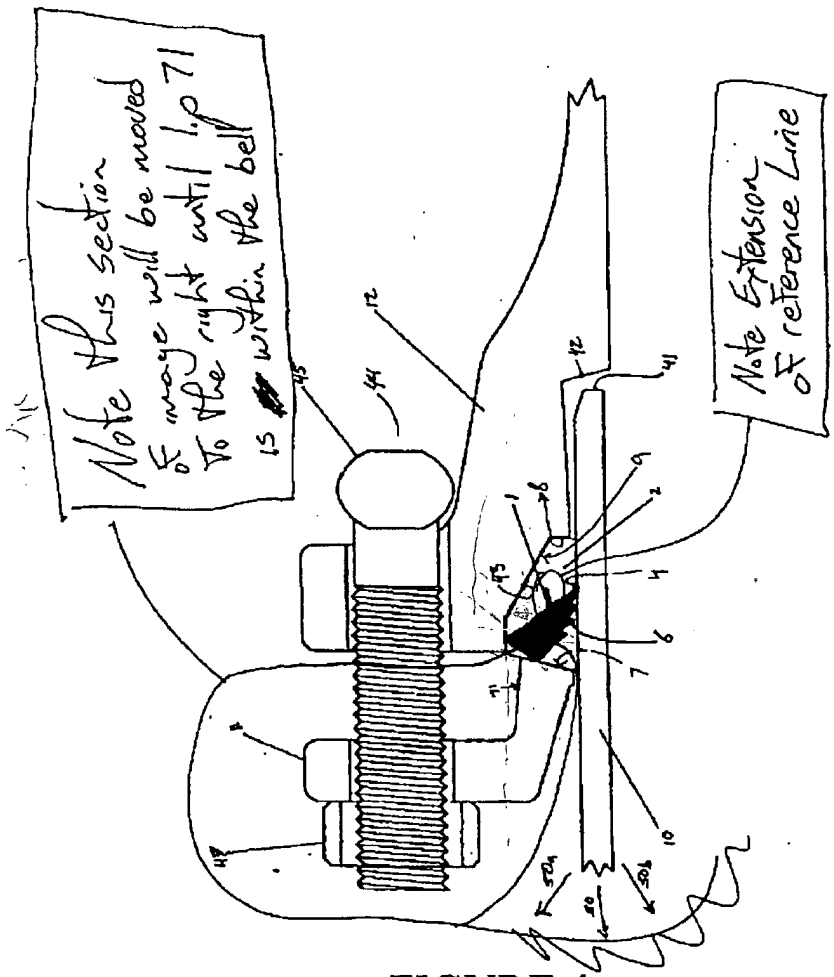


FIGURE 4

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Appl. No. 09/590,586
Response Dated Aug. 6, 2003
Reply to Office Action of 6/9/03

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION
37 C.F.R. 1.8

I hereby certify that the items detailed below are being transmitted by facsimile to the United States Patent and Trademark Office on **August 6, 2003**, to facsimile number 703-305-7687, to the attention of Melody M. Burch.

1.	Fax Cover Sheet	1 p.
2.	Cover Letter	1 p.
3.	Response to Office Action	
	Cover/Index	1 p.
	Claims Listing	3 p.
	Drawings Amendment	1 p.
	Remarks/Argument	3 p.
	Appendix (Drawing Correction Sheets)	2 p.
	Certificate of Transmission	1 p.

Total 13 pages

Nathan W. Johnson
Registration No. 44,173

Date: August 6, 2003

AUTHORIZATION TO CHARGE DEPOSIT ACCOUNT

If, after processing the enclosed checks, any charges, fees, or sums due remain unpaid in connection with this correspondence, I hereby authorize the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks to charge all such remaining fees, charges, and other sums due to Deposit Account Number 50-0954.

Nathan W. Johnson, Esq.
Authorized User

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Date August 6, 2003
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Name	Location	Phone	Fax
Melody Burch	Art Unit 3683 — US Patent Office Re: Ser. No. 09/590,586	703-306-4618	703-3057687

FROM

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MESSAGE

Response to Office Action
Amendment

Serial Numb r 09/590,586
Examiner Melody Burch

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August 6, 2003

VIA facsimile to 703-305-7687

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Assistant Commissioner for Patents
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Re: Response to Office Action

Serial No.:	09/590,586
Filed:	June 8, 2000
Applicant:	Holmes
Group Art Unit:	3683
Examiner:	Melody Burch

Commissioner:

Enclosed herewith is a Response to Office Action, including an amendment in the revised format. Please enter this Response into the application file, consider the remarks, and reconsider the application in light thereof. Thank you for your assistance in this matter. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions.

Yours very truly,

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